

REMARKS

This Amendment is being filed in response to the Office Action mailed on May 26, 2009 which has been reviewed and carefully considered. Reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the amendments made above and the remarks to follow are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4 are pending in the application. Claim 1 is an independent claim.

In the Office Action, claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2005/0120902 to Adams ("Adams") in view of Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (AAPA) and U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0047535 to Schueller ("Schueller"). It is respectfully submitted that claims 1-4 are patentable over Adams in view of AAPA and Schueller for at least the following reasons.

It is undisputed that "[t]he combination of Adams et al. and the Applicant's Admitted Prior Art does not teach the provision of a first substrate with a surface having higher affinity for the ink than the barrier, contacting the contact surface of the protruding

feature with the first substrate, transferring ink from the contact surface of the first substrate and removing the stamp from the surface of the first substrate." (See, Office Action, page 3.)

Schueller is relied on to provide that which is admitted missing from Adams in view of AAPA, however it is respectfully submitted that reliance on Schueller is misplaced.

Schueller shows a process for microcontact printing (see, Schueller, abstract) wherein after an ink is applied to the stamp surface, the stamp surface is then dried. In one embodiment, drying is accomplished by using an "absorbent material ... pressed into contact with the stamp ..." (See, Schueller, paragraph [0051], cited in the Office Action.)

Schueller is clear that (emphasis added) "[a] 'dried' stamp means that extra ink has been removed from the stamp surface, and the carrier or solvent (if present) has been removed, such that the ink to be used in the printing process remains adsorbed to the stamp material." (See, Schueller, paragraph [0051], cited in the Office Action.) Schueller is clear that after the drying process, (emphasis added) "[t]he stamp contacts the substrate so that the

surface of the stamp having ink applied thereto is in contact with the surface of the substrate that is to receive the ink." (See, Schueller, paragraph [0053].)

In other words, Schueller merely teaches removing excess ink from the stamp surface, however, clearly teaches that ink remains absorbed to the stamp surface after contact with the absorbent material.

In stark contrast, the present invention as recited in independent claim 1, amongst other patentable elements recites (illustrative emphasis provided):

providing an elastomeric stamp having a bulk surface and at least one feature protruding from the bulk surface, the protruding feature having a contact surface and an edge extending from the contact surface to the bulk surface, the protruding feature and the bulk surface carrying a barrier layer; ...

providing a first substrate with a surface having a higher affinity for the ink than the barrier layer;
contacting the contact surface of the protruding feature with the surface of the first substrate;
transferring all of the ink from the contact surface of the protruding feature to the surface of the first substrate;

removing the elastomeric stamp from the surface of the first substrate such that none of the ink remains on the contact surface of the protruding feature;

providing a second substrate with a surface having a higher affinity for the ink than the barrier layer;
contacting the contact surface of the protruding feature with the surface of the second substrate; and
providing the surface of the second substrate with an ink pattern by transferring the ink from the edge of the protruding feature to the surface of the second substrate.

It is admitted by the Office Action that Adams and AAPA fail to teach contacting a first substrate and Schueller, which is relied on for showing this feature, merely teaches a drying process wherein ink remains on the protruding features of the stamp.

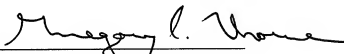
Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that independent claim 1 be allowed. In addition, it is respectfully submitted that claims 2-4 should also be allowed at least based on their dependence from independent claim 1 as well as their individually patentable elements.

In addition, Applicants deny any statement, position or averment of the Examiner that is not specifically addressed by the foregoing argument and response. Any rejections and/or points of argument not addressed would appear to be moot in view of the presented remarks. However, the Applicants reserve the right to

submit further arguments in support of the above stated position, should that become necessary. No arguments are waived and none of the Examiner's statements are conceded.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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August 26, 2009

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